

Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9397

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 7240

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS, KN

SUBJECT: ROK FONMIN QUOTED IN PRESS ON DEFERRAL

REF: (A) SEOUL 7215, (B) SEOUL 7044, (C) STATE 219341

1. ROK PRESS SEPTEMBER 12 CARRIED HEADLINE AND FRONT PAGE
STORIES TO EFFECT ROKG SEEKING DEFERRAL UNGA/KOREA DEBATE,
BASED ON REPORTS OF FOREIGN MINISTER'S AIRPORT PRESS
CONFERENCE PRIOR DEPARTURE FOR U.S. HEADLINE IN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE KOREA TIMES SEPTEMBER 12 READS "GOVERNMENT SEEKS
TO SHELVE UN DEBATE ON KOREA;" HANGKUK ILBO HEADLINE READS
"STUDYING DELAY OF DISCUSSION OF KOREAN PROBLEM" WITH SUB-
HEAD "WESTERN SIDE HOLDS OVER HALF OF GENERAL COMMITTEE."

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2. MOST DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF FONMIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE APPEAR

IN HANGKUK ILBO AND KOREA TIMES. ACCORDING TO HANGKUK ILBO FONMIN SAID THAT COMPOSITION OF GENERAL COMMITTEE FAVORABLE TO WEST AND THAT ONE STRATEGY WOULD BE TO DEFER DEBATE ON KOREA QUESTION. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF MAJORITY OF GENERAL COMMITTEE SO DESIRES ROKG WOULD NOT OPPOSE. ARTICLE ALSO SAYS FONMIN WILL DISCUSS FURTHER WITH UNSYG WALDHEIM IN ATTEMPT TO PRECLUDE TWO CONTRADICTORY RESOLUTIONS AS LAST YEAR ON BOTH KOREA AND WESTERN SAHARA. FONMIN QUOTED IN HANGKUK ILBO AS SAYING THAT "IT'S BECOMING DEFINITE THAT THE WESTERN COUNTRIES HAVE MORE THAN A MAJORITY OF THE 25 MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE; IF THERE IS A GENERAL COMMITTEE VOTE SHOWDOWN OUR SIDE WILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE". MINISTER ALSO QUOTED IN SAME ARTICLE AS SAYING "HOWEVER, WE WILL WAIT AND DECIDE REGARDING POSITIVE INVESTIGATION OF DEFERRAL OF DISCUSSION UNTIL JUST BEFORE UN PLENARY OPENS, WHEN ATMOSPHERE IS FULLY RIPE."

3. EMBOFF CONTACTED MOFA UN DIVISION CHIEF YI CHONG-BIN SEPTEMBER 13 TO EXPRESS DISMAY AT EXPOSURE OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION REGARDING CORE GROUP TACTICS IN ROK PRESS ACCOUNTS OF FONMIN'S PRESS CONFERENCE. YI SAID SUBJECT OF DEFERRAL HAD BEEN RAISED BY REPORTERS CONCERNED WITH TACTICS IN GENERAL COMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO YI, WHO WAS NOT PRESENT FOR ENTIRE CONFERENCE, FONMIN SAID GENERAL COMMITTEE COMPOSITION WAS FAVORABLE THIS YEAR AND IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER ROKG WOULD ATTEMPT DEFER KOREA DEBATE THIS YEAR MINISTER REPLIED IT "DEPENDS ON CORE GROUP CONSENSUS." YI ALSO SAID FONMIN SAID HE WOULD GO TO NEW YORK AND HAVE CONVERSATION WITH WALDHEIM ON POSSIBILITY AVOIDING TWO CONTRADICTORY KOREA RESOLUTIONS.

4. JAPANESE EMBASSY (HAMADA) HAS CONTACTED US TO EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THIS REVELATION OF "SECRET AND SENSITIVE CORE GROUP TACTICS." HAMADA NOTED THAT SEVERAL CORE GROUP MEMBERS HAD EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT DEFERRAL. HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT HOWEVER SUGGEST THAT FONMIN HAD DELIBERATELY LEAKED CORE GROUP STRATEGY.

5. COMMENT: MOFA WAS FULLY AWARE OF, AND IN FACT HAD ACKNOWLEDGED (REF B), IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING CORE GROUP CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFERRAL INITIATIVE SECRET. IN ADDITION USUN MISOFF WILSON IN CONVERSATION WITH IO BUREAU DIRECTOR CHUNG U-YONG SEPTEMBER 10 HAD EMPHASIZED CORE GROUP SENSITIVITY TO ACCOUNTS OF SUPPOSEDLY CONFIDENTIAL CORE GROUP MEETINGS APPEARING IN ROK PRESS. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER CHOSE TO REPLY TO PRESS QUERIES IN FASHION WHICH PERMITTED PRESS TO ASSOCIATE HIS NAME WITH HIGHLY ACCURATE SPECULATIVE STORIES ABOUT CORE GROUP TACTICS. END COMMENT.

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